

VZCZCXYZ0008  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBS #0142 0171418  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 171418Z JAN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4082  
INFO RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 7753

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 000142

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SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [BE](#)  
SUBJECT: CODEL WEXLER MEETING WITH FM DE GUCHT

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 16, CONGRESSMAN ROBERT WEXLER IN HIS ROLE AS INCOMING HFRG EUROPEAN SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR MET WITH BELGIAN FM KAREL DE GUCHT. WEXLER AND DE GUCHT DISCUSSED HOW CLOSE THE U.S. AND EU ARE ON MOST FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. DE GUCHT ENCOURAGED THE U.S. TO ENGAGE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND WANTS THE QUARTET REENERGIZED. HE VIEWS KOSOVO AS A LOOMING PROBLEM WITH A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, NOT JUST RUSSIA, WORRIED ABOUT THE PRECEDENT OF AN INDEPENDENT KOSOVO. WEXLER SUPPORTED AN INDEPENDENT EU MILITARY CAPABILITY, BUT WARNED DE GUCHT THAT THE EUROPEANS WOULD HAVE TO INVEST MORE IN DEFENSE TO HAVE A CAPABLE MILITARY FORCE. DE GUCHT NOTED THAT MOST EUROPEANS SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO GO TO WAR AND WON'T FUND ARMIES WHICH COULD. ON CLIMATE CHANGE, WEXLER SAID THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS JUST PASSED EMISSIONS GUIDELINES, AND HE PLANS TO FILE AN IDENTICAL BILL IN CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) WEXLER, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR KOROLOGOS, DCM IMBRIE, AND STAFFERS ERIC JOHNSON AND JONATHAN KATZ, MET WITH KAREL DE GUCHT, AMERICAS COUNTRY DIRECTOR LUC DE VOLDER, AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE FM'S CABINET WALTER STEVENS. WEXLER TOLD DE GUCHT THAT AFTER A FULL DAY OF HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS AT THE EU, HE WAS STRUCK BY HOW CLOSE US/EU RELATIONS ARE, FAR BETTER THAN TWO YEARS AGO. HE SAW NO SIGNIFICANT DIVISIONS IN POLICY ON IRAN, AFGHANISTAN, THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, KOSOVO. THE TURNING POINT WAS THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO BRUSSELS IN FEBRUARY 2005, A "BRILLIANT FOREIGN POLICY MANEUVER" WHICH HAS PAID GREAT DIVIDENDS. DE GUCHT AGREED FULLY WITH WEXLER THAT THE EU AND U.S. HAVE THE SAME ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, INCLUDING RUSSIA. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE EU BELIEVES THAT SOMETHING MUST HAPPEN QUICKLY ) ANY DELAY WILL MAKE THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST MORE DANGEROUS. ISRAEL CLAIMED IT HAD NO NEGOTIATING PARTNER WHEN ARAFAT WAS ALIVE; NOW HE IS DEAD, THEY STILL DON'T HAVE ONE WITH HAMAS IN POWER. ISRAEL LOOKS FIRST TO THE U.S. AND THE PALESTINIANS LOOK TO THE EUROPEANS. THE U.S. AND EU NEED TO REVIVE THE QUARTET TO USE THEIR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES. WEXLER ADDED THAT DR. RICE IS POISED TO FULLY ENGAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, BUT THIS WILL BE COMPLICATED BY IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN.

¶3. (U) ON CLIMATE CHANGE, HE EXPECTED THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS TO LEAD TOWARDS CLOSER AGREEMENT CHANGE WITH THE EU. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS JUST PASSED EMISSIONS GUIDELINES AND WEXLER PLANS TO FILE AN IDENTICAL BILL IN CONGRESS.

¶4. (SBU) ON KOSOVO, DE GUCHT SAID THAT THE U.S. AND EU ARE IN AGREEMENT, BUT IT IS GOING TO BE HARD TO FIND A WAY TO INDEPENDENCE. THE KOSOVARs WANT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE RIGHT NOW, BUT RUSSIA WON'T BE WILLING TO GO ALONG. AND INDEPENDENCE MAKES OSCE MEMBERS NERVOUS SINCE IT RUNS AGAINST ITS PRINCIPLES OF THE INVIOABILITY OF BORDERS AND SELF DETERMINATION AGAINST THE WILL OF SERBIA. A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE PRECEDENT INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO WOULD SET.

15. (SBU) DE GUCHT ASKED HOW THE AMERICANS LOOKED AT SOLANA'S ROLE AND CSFP. WEXLER ASSERTED THAT THE U.S. WANTS A STRONG EUROPEAN PARTNER. BUT IF THE EUROPEANS WANT A DISTINCT EUROPEAN FORCE, THEY WILL NEED TO PAY FOR IT. THE EU CAN'T JUST PLAN ON BORROWING THE CAPABILITIES THEY WILL NEED FROM NATO. THEY WILL HAVE TO INCREASE THEIR DEFENSE EXPENDITURES TO IMPLEMENT A REAL CSFP. DE GUCHT SAID THAT THE BATTLE GROUPS HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN TWO YEARS. BUT THERE WON'T BE A SUPRA-EU ARMY, AND MOST OF THE EUROPEANS REALLY DON'T WANT TO FIGHT A WAR ) EXCEPT THE UK ) AND WON'T PAY FOR AN ARMY WHICH CAN.

16. (SBU) ON AFGHANISTAN, DE GUCHT SAID THAT NATO IS MAKING PROGRESS. HE HAS RECENTLY BEEN IN AFGHANISTAN AND IS IMPRESSED WITH WHAT THE PRTS ARE ACCOMPLISHING, INCLUDING IN KONDUZ IN THE BELGIAN/GERMAN PRT.

17. (U) WEXLER HAS NOT REVIEWED THIS CABLE.

KOROLOGOS